



*Safe***Light**[®]
*Saves***Lives**



City of Wilmington SafeLight Progress Report 2004

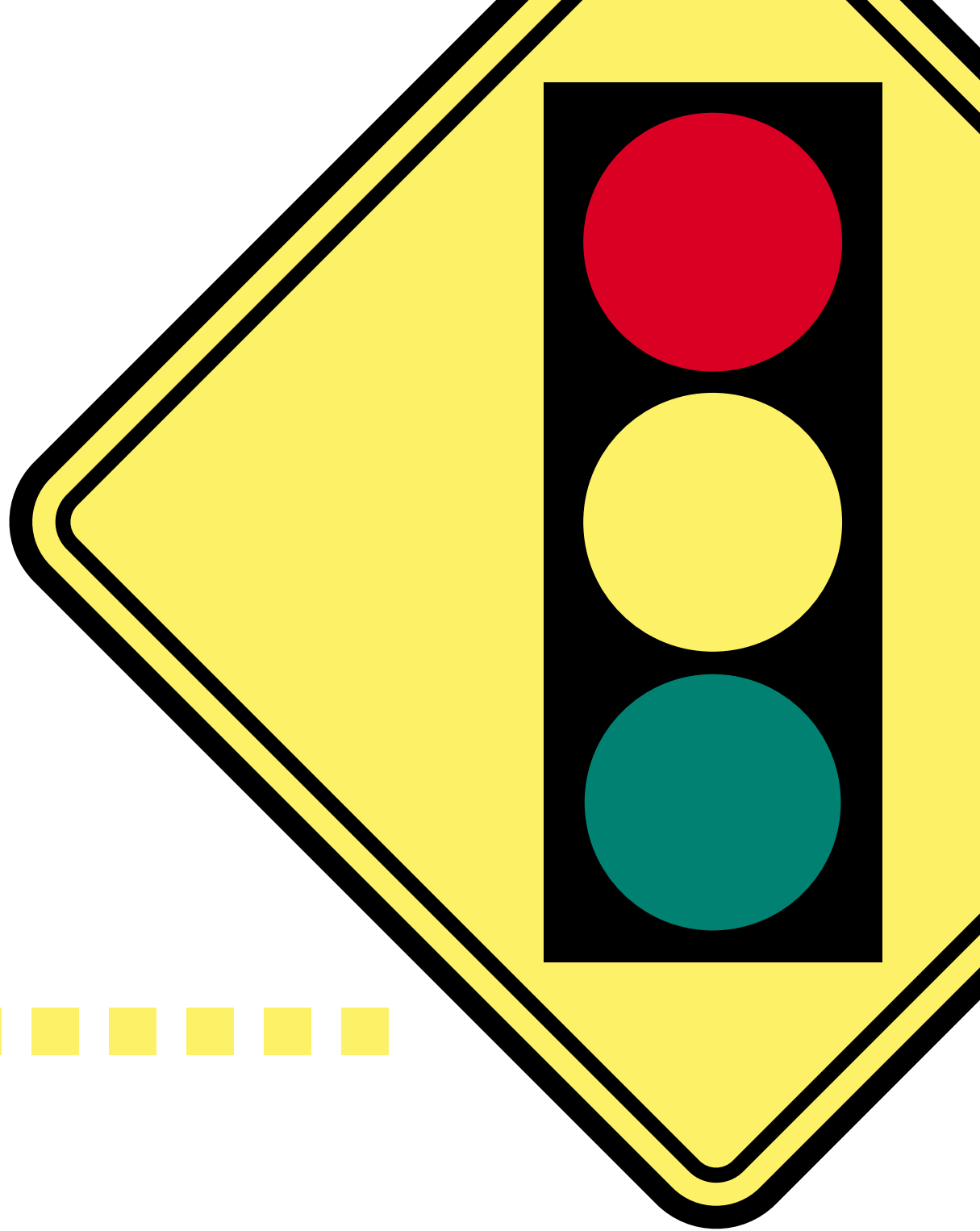
We're Putting a Stop to an Alarming Trend

It's so simple: Red means stop. Yet every year in the U.S., more than hundreds of thousands of people are injured and more than a thousand killed in collisions that involve a driver running a red light. The problem is increasing. In fact, the fatality rate for collisions caused by motorists running red lights has gone up at more than twice the rate of other vehicle crashes.

Because red-light-runners are often accelerating – trying to speed up to run the red light – injuries caused by these collisions are often more brutal than many other collisions. And because most crashes at red lights involve a car improperly entering an intersection, these angle collisions impact the other car from the side. With less than 10% of cars on the road today having side air bags, there is only a door to protect most passengers.

Not only is red-light-running a national problem, it affects us here at home, too: In the last several years, New Hanover County has topped the AAA Carolina's list of most dangerous North Carolina counties for motorists.

So the City of Wilmington is working hard to put a stop to red light runners and dangerous drivers who irresponsibly put others at risk – because we know that lives are depending on it. Quite simply, *SafeLight Saves Lives*.





Red-Light-Runners Have Wilmington Seeing Red

There's no doubt, we live in a fast-paced society. Our always-on-the-go mentality often leads us racing through our daily tasks, errands and appointments. But somehow, many of us have forgotten the basic rules learned long ago: Red means stop. And Yellow means slow down – not hurry up.

Across the nation, running red lights is the leading cause of urban automobile crashes, representing more than 50% of all intersection collisions. And more than half of the deaths in red-light-running crashes are other motorists and pedestrians.

As the City of Wilmington has grown, so too has the number of automobile collisions. Each year, car crashes needlessly injure thousands of our residents. We must put a stop to running red lights. And that's why we've adopted the SafeLight program for our city – we're working to save lives and protect our citizens from harm, injuries, disabilities and possible fatalities.

Dramatic Results Since SafeLight Got the Green Light

Since the first SafeLight camera was installed in Wilmington in March 2000, the City has issued more than 53,000 citations at SafeLight intersections. More than 12,000 citations were issued in the first six months of this year alone. Knowing that they will be “caught on camera” and issued a citation, drivers have become more aware of running a red light and more cautious with their driving. As such, total collisions at SafeLight intersections have declined at the staggering rate of 31%. And most importantly, the number of personal injuries caused by red light runners has declined by an amazing 39%.

As Wilmington drivers have become more cautious, our streets have become significantly safer for both drivers and pedestrians. And, as fees are collected from red light runners, net revenue is being used to fund additional safety improvements.



STOP

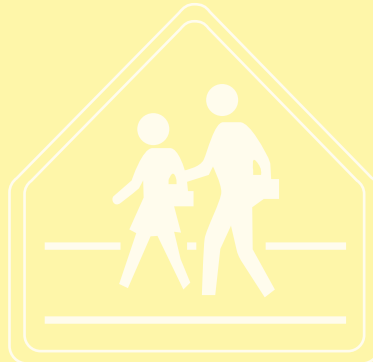


SPEED
LIMIT
35

SafeLight Is On The Go

Since its inception, the SafeLight program has been expanded to 15 enforced intersections throughout the City of Wilmington. The City chose SafeLight locations after studying collision statistics showing where the most crashes were occurring due to red-light-running:

- Carolina Beach Rd & Southern Blvd.
- Dawson St. & South 3rd St.
- Dawson St. & South 16th St.
- Market St. & Gordon Rd.
- Market St. & Kerr Ave.
- Market St. & Martin Luther King, Jr. Pkwy
- Shipyard Blvd. & South 17th St.
- South College Rd. & Oleander Dr.
- South College Rd. & South 17th St.
- South 16th St. & Wooster St.
- South 17th St. & Dawson St.
- Wooster St. & South 3rd St.
- Wooster St. & 5th Ave.
- Wooster St. & South 17th St.
- Wrightsville Ave. & Colonial Dr.



Certainly, SafeLight can be considered a very successful program, serving to reduce crashes and save lives throughout the City of Wilmington. But there's more work to do – and we're not stopping.

Thanks to this innovative program, the City of Wilmington now has a vast amount of information to help us improve traffic safety even more. We've identified locations where additional engineering solutions are indicated or where field changes may help reduce collisions even further.

The High Price of Unsafe Driving Habits

While SafeLight is helping to reduce collisions and save lives, it's also helping to reduce high costs associated with crashes.

In the three years prior to camera installations, there were 625 recorded collisions at just 10 of the SafeLight intersections.

In addition to the human toll, these crashes resulted in approximately \$12 million in property damage including vehicles, as well as lost productivity in terms of wages.

Over the last three years with SafeLight, however, the total number of collisions reduced by 191, saving our community approximately \$3.8 million.

Through SafeLight, insurance costs can also be contained – and traffic flow can continue. For every minute a traffic lane is closed for collision and response, it takes four minutes for traffic flow in the City of Wilmington to recover. And because SafeLight augments police traffic enforcement, they can focus more clearly on other crimes, working to protect our citizens and provide safety for our community.



How SafeLight is Putting The Brakes On Needless Injuries and Deaths

If a vehicle enters an intersection while the signal is red, the SafeLight sensors in the pavement trigger nearby cameras to collect three photographs of the vehicle. The all-digital camera system, which ensures security and accuracy, only operates when the signal is red.

Trained technicians review the photos to objectively determine whether the vehicle ran a red light. The photos do not identify persons in the car or in the intersection. If any information from the photos is questionable, the City does not issue a citation. If it is deemed that a violation has occurred, a citation including photos of the incident is mailed to the vehicle owner. If the vehicle owner was not driving during the violation, they may transfer responsibility to the person who was.

The civil penalty for a SafeLight violation is \$50. Like parking tickets, SafeLight citations do not result in driver license points or automobile insurance increases.

They do, however, result in a more cautious and aware driver who can make our City's streets safer.

1

Photo 1 shows the traffic signal was red as the motorist approached the light.



Photo 2 shows the motorist did not legally stop.



2

Photo 3 shows the license plate and distinguishes the vehicle.



3



SIGNAL AHEAD

Most Americans (96 percent) are afraid of being hit by a red-light-runner, but nearly one in five admit to running a red light in the last ten intersections. The leading excuse given for red-light-running was neither frustration nor road rage – it was simply “being in a hurry.”

With SafeLight, the City of Wilmington has adopted the picture-perfect solution to keeping our streets safer. And it's working.



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